

VZCZCXRO9666

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RUEHLZ RUEHNP RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSK RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHVI #1866 3531339
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 181339Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1737
INFO RUEHZN/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS VIENNA 001866

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: DOMESTIC SECURITY POLICY OUTLINE OF THE NEW
AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT

¶1. Following is a summary of the key elements from the November 23 coalition agreement between Austria's governing parties -- the Social Democrats and the conservative People's Party -- on domestic security and counterterrorism:

Organized Crime

¶2. The agreement calls for an increased focus on international cooperation against organized crime. This is to be pursued in part by expanding cooperative training programs, officer exchanges, and joint investigations with law enforcement authorities of other EU states. It also advocates increased exchanges of DNA, fingerprint, and vehicle data in the context of the Pruem Treaty. The governing parties pledge to update legislation on video surveillance to harmonize the practice across Austria.

Terrorism/Incitement

¶3. The text states that law enforcement authorities have the power to conduct online investigations in terrorism cases. Existing, "insufficient" legislation against "hate speech" should be strengthened so that speech addressing smaller groups can be prosecuted as a crime. Legislation prohibiting "incitement" should be strengthened by expanding the list of protected groups and individuals, in accordance with the recommendations of the UN Committee to Eliminate Racial Discrimination. Legal amendments will be adopted so that attendance at a terrorism training camp inside Austria or abroad will itself be a criminal offense.

Police Force

¶4. The new government plans to create 1,000 new police cadet positions per year over the next five years. A new program will aim to diversify the police force by recruiting more women officers and officers with migration backgrounds. A new master's degree program for police will be created, and officers will be given the option of enrolling. The government also plans to monitor more closely the operations of private security companies.

Personal Identification

¶5. The agreement calls for the modernization of identification documents and records. Data for residency permits will be fully digitized and made accessible by authorities across the country. The new government plans to adopt draft legislation introducing passports with fingerprints.

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